

Tolerance Redefined

By

Curtis Dickinson

Since the deadly attack on the World Trade Center last year there has been a concentrated effort by government leaders and the media to create a national climate of tolerance with regard to religion. Events have been staged in which leaders of various religions, with contradicting tenets, have embraced one another and announced that “all faiths” are of equal value in the eyes of God and that such “diversity” is a great asset to our nation.

Many Christians are dumbfounded by this development. They do not want to appear narrow-minded or bigoted, and yet they want to be faithful to their conviction that the Christian faith is the one faith ordained by God.

It is significant that this universal demand for tolerance of all religion comes at a time when international efforts are being made to create a global court with global laws and a global military power to force compliance.

To see how this has come about we need to go back over 100 years, to 1893, when Walter Rauschenbusch was campaigning for socialism as a member of the Fabian Society. He stated: “The only power that can make socialism succeed, if it is established, is religion.” In 1903 he co-founded the Federal Council of Churches, later called the National Council of Churches, part of the World Council of Churches, which is dominated by Socialists, as is the United Nations.

The proponents of a World Socialist Government – call it the New World Order or whatever – realize that in order to succeed they must synthesize capitalism and communism as well as all religions into a one-world religion based upon what John Dewey called a “common faith.”

In keeping with these plans, in 1995 the members of UNESCO signed the “Declaration of Principles on Tolerance,” which stated that tolerance “is not only a moral duty; it is also a political and legal requirement.” The Declaration indicates that tolerance means actual “acceptance” of forms of expression, and “it involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism...It is necessary to promote systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the...religious sources of intolerance.” This means that Christians who have religious dogmas or believe in moral absolutes could be in legal trouble in the future if UNESCO’s declaration were to be enforced. (From “Steps Toward the New World Order” by Dr. D. L. Cuddy in *The Florida Forum*, 2002)

Although tolerance is not a biblical command – I cannot find the word in the Bible – Christians are commanded to have concern for the welfare of all people. This is the meaning of agape, love, as in “Love your neighbor as yourself.” We naturally wish to

treat others as we would be treated, and to live at peace with all men, regardless of their religion. (Rom. 12:18)

But the New World Order does not stop there. The popular demand for tolerance “involves the rejection of dogmatism and absolutism.” Such tolerance would eliminate any standard of values and deny any absolutes. It would mean that the claims of Jesus couldn’t be regarded as true.

Obviously this would abolish the Christian faith altogether, as it is based upon objective facts and embraces absolute morals. To practice tolerance as defined and understood by the media and the popular mind today is to abandon the Christian faith.

From the beginning Christians were warned that those who hold to the truth of God would be opposed by the world. In Christ’s prayer for his disciples there is an emphatic contrast between the world and the truth. “I have given them thy word, and the world hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world: sanctify, - them in the truth; thy word is truth. As thou did send me into the world, even so I send them into the world” (John 17:14, 16-18). Truth is always unwelcome to those who have been grossly deceived by Christ’s enemies. The Christian is sent into the world to bear witness to the truth, even as Jesus was, and we can expect the same kind of reception He received. Jesus explained: “Every one that does evil hates the light, and comes not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that does the truth comes to the light...” (John 3:20-21).

Christians are exhorted to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). To contend for one particular faith is to declare all others invalid, and this is seen by the global society as a sign of division and rebellion. According to the UNESCO Declaration of Principles of Tolerance such a position would put a Christian in legal trouble.

The apostles faced this very problem. Peter and John were arrested for proclaiming “in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.” The truth concerning Jesus and the resurrection negated the religion the Jews held; so they arrested Peter and John. When they finally released them they instructed them “not to teach at all nor speak in the name of Jesus.” But Peter and John answered, “We cannot but speak the things we saw and heard” (Acts 4:20). So far there has been no law that forbids preaching that Jesus is the only means of salvation, but many have succumbed to the pressure of political correctness, in the name of tolerance, and have abandoned this truth. Instead of trying to persuade Muslims and Jews that Jesus is the Christ and that there is eternal life only in Him, they have embraced the unbelievers and given tacit approval of their religions, religions that deny Christ and are diametrically opposed to Him.

Let no one misunderstand. I am strongly in favor of the tolerance that should be practiced in regard to the faults, failures and misunderstandings that are common to us all. We should be tolerant with other believers with whom we disagree on Bible interpretation, “forbearing one another, and forgiving each other” in kindness and meekness (Col. 3:12).

There is too little of this kind of tolerance among Christians. But this is not the issue. What the world is telling us is that we have no right to claim that Christ spoke truth when He said, "No man comes unto the Father but by me." Under the new definition of tolerance we must deny that Peter spoke truly when he said, "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

To follow Christ is to accept an exclusive faith. It holds that: There is only one sacrifice for sin: the death of Jesus. There is only one who has been raised from the dead and made both Lord and Christ. There is only one who has been exalted to the right hand of God and given a name above all other names in heaven or on earth. There is only one who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. There is only "one mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus." There is only one through whom God will judge the world. There is only one through whom man may come to God. When one confesses faith in Christ he excludes Judaism and Islam and all other religions.

Christians have always been leaders in promoting freedom for every person to believe whatever he will, and also freedom to proclaim it. But the new definition of tolerance denies Christians the freedom to obey Christ who commands us to proclaim the gospel and tell the world that Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and the way of salvation. It has been noted that our present society insists on tolerance of every belief and lifestyle, except that of Christians.

In spite of all the talk about diversity and tolerance, the leaders of pagan religions teach their people that the Christ is not the only begotten son of God and that He is not the only way to eternal life. As they gain in numbers, they gain in power, and already exert a great force to silence the true message of Christ. Speaking the truth can be dangerous. It cost Jesus His life. It may seem good to create a coalition of the great religions, but any time the truth is united with that which is false it is truth that loses its power.

Christians are to be the light of the world. When we do and speak up for truth we fail to be light for this generation in which it is so desperately needed. More than that, we fail God.

There is, indeed, a culture war, and a struggle for the mind of man. Over 2000 years ago Paul wrote that our war is aimed at "casting down imaginations and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor.10:5). We are still engaged in this same war. Let's soldier on!

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